

School of Environmental and Forest Sciences University of Washington

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Annual Report

2019-2020 Academic Year

Overview

The 2019-2020 academic year was the first year in which the School of Environmental and Forest Sciences (SEFS) had a faculty-led Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEIC). The DEIC's work was carried out through monthly meetings that were held in-person until the Covid-19 pandemic shut the UW campus in March. The national and international protests that followed the May murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police galvanized action in SEFS and elsewhere to step up our efforts to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Committee Membership

The DEIC's composition changed substantially over the course of the year, with particular growth in early summer of 2020 when several SEFS community members asked to join the committee (Table 1). The DEIC would particularly like to recognize the many years of work by Dr. Michelle Trudeau, formerly the graduate adviser in SEFS. Michelle left SEFS for a new position in the School of Medicine in June. Michelle provided leadership in SEFS on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues for many years, and her contributions were foundational to the work of the DEIC.

Committee Events

In autumn, the DEIC committed to holding quarterly open DEIC meetings to provide a space for dialogue with the larger SEFS community. Four open meetings were held over the course of the year.

The first open meeting was held January 22, 2020, in the Forest Club Room. The DEIC provided an introduction and then provided opportunities for input on three questions: What are your priorities for the SEFS DEIC? What is the single most important challenge to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in SEFS? What is the best sign of progress in the right direction, which the DEIC can amplify?

The second open meeting was held May 18, 2020, online, after the COVID-19 pandemic had closed campus for in-person meetings. The DEIC provided an introduction and update on activities and provided opportunities for discussion on two topics: (1) Feedback on the draft SEFS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan, and (2) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and COVID-19—what can the DEIC do to support SEFS during these uncertain times?

On June 3, 2020, following the start of nation-wide protests in the wake of the George Floyd tragedy, the DEIC held an online listening session. There was no prescribed agenda for this meeting, as this meeting was an opportunity for the SEFS community to hold a space for conversation and processing of the recent events.

During the week of June 1-5, 2020, the DEIC sent daily emails to the SEFS community highlighting various resources to support BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and other marginalized members of our community, and to combat racism, sexism, and other biases. Those resources can now be found on the SEFS website at: <https://sefs.uw.edu/intranet/committees/diversity-committee/resources-for-diversity-equity-and-inclusivity/>.

Finally, on June 18, 2020, the DEIC held their last open meeting of the academic year. The meeting consisted of an introduction by the committee, time for student groups to present, and an open question and answer session with committee members and SEFS Director Dan Brown.

Committee Activities

Activities that the committee engaged in during the 2019-2020 academic year included:

- GO-MAP Assessment – in autumn, the DEIC used an assessment provided by the Graduate Opportunities and Minority Achievement Program (<https://grad.uw.edu/equity-inclusion-and-diversity/go-map/>) to evaluate the degree to which SEFS' website captures diversity, equity, and inclusion in the department. The SEFS website received only poor to middling scores based on the assessment, which prompted work on two other areas, including the development of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan for SEFS and updates of the SEFS website (see below)
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan – in winter and spring quarters, the DEIC outlined a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan for SEFS. The outline identified five pillars: *Diversity Leadership in SEFS*, *Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body*, *Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Faculty and Staff*, *Establishing a Culture of Inclusivity*, and *Integrating Diversity and Inclusivity into Scholarship and Learning*. A major effort during the summer of 2020 will be to complete a draft of the plan.
- SEFS website – in spring quarter, the DEIC worked with the SEFS Communications office to update the SEFS website with more complete information on the DEIC and related resources.

This update was informed by the GO-MAP assessment. The main diversity, equity, and inclusion page on the SEFS website is at <https://sefs.uw.edu/about/diversity/> and links for that page will guide site visitors to pages on the DEIC, resources, and other diversity, equity, and inclusion activities across campus.

- Review of faculty hiring procedures – in spring quarter, the SEFS Elected Faculty Council prepared a document laying out the process governing faculty searches. The DEIC provided a review of this document to ensure that hiring practices in SEFS are following best practices related to recruiting and retaining faculty from a diversity of backgrounds and identities.
- Review of McIntire-Stennis Request for Proposals – in spring quarter, the SEFS Research Committee updated the Request for Proposals for the McIntire-Stennis funding stream. US Forest Service McIntire-Stennis funds are allocated to faculty based on a competitive process, with funds primarily allocated to support graduate student research. The DEIC provided a review of the document with a view toward promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion via the McIntire-Stennis funding stream.
- Lactation room – starting in winter quarter, the DEIC worked with SEFS facilities and administration to establish a lactation room. The room will be available once on-campus activities resume.
- GRE moratorium – in spring quarter, the SEFS co-chairs spearheaded an effort to bring a proposal for a 1-year moratorium on the GRE requirement for graduate admissions to the SEFS faculty. The moratorium was developed in recognition of reduced availability of the GRE during the pandemic, and in recognition of the resultant greater burdens placed on marginalized communities. This moratorium was passed, and faculty discussions directly informed development of a faculty working group on holistic admissions processes in SEFS. That working group is meeting during summer 2020.
- SEFS DEIC members attended diversity, equity, and inclusion meetings across campus over the course of the 2019-2020 academic year, sharing lessons learned and learning from and coordinating with diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts campus-wide. These meetings included but were not limited to the College of Environment Diversity Committee meetings and the university Graduate Diversity Committee meetings.

Next Steps

For the summer of 2020, the DEIC has committed to three tasks:

- First, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan that was outlined during the year will be fully drafted, ready for the SEFS community to provide feedback in the autumn (the details of the process for garnering feedback are still being determined).
- Second, the DEIC is working with the SEFS Director's office to establish a system for reporting bias incidents in SEFS.
- Third, the DEIC is working with the SEFS Director's office to establish a dedicated student space in SEFS, with the goal of providing a space that is open to all students, and explicitly recognizes the needs of BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students in SEFS.
- In addition to these three activities, a faculty member who represents the DEIC is participating in a faculty working group evaluating holistic admissions processes for the SEFS graduate program.

Plans for the 2020-2021 academic year will be informed by the development of the DEI Plan.

Table 1. Membership of the SEFS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee during the 2019-2020 academic year and during the summer of 2020.

Academic Year Committee	Summer Committee
Sarah Converse (faculty; co-chair)	Sarah Converse (faculty; co-chair)
Brian Harvey (faculty; co-chair)	Brian Harvey (faculty; co-chair)
Stanley Asah (faculty; adviser to the Director)	Stanley Asah (faculty; adviser to the Director)
Ernesto Alvarado (faculty)	Ernesto Alvarado (faculty)
Courtney Bobsin (graduate student)	Bryce Bartl-Geller (staff)
Jay Johnson (emeritus faculty)	Courtney Bobsin (graduate student)
Van Kane (faculty)	Amanda Davis (staff)
Jack Lockhart (staff)	Stacey Dixon (staff)
Esaac Mazengia (undergraduate student)	Jay Johnson (emeritus faculty)
Elena O'Neill (staff)	Van Kane (faculty)
Michelle Trudeau (staff)	Josh Lawler (faculty)
Kathleen Wolf (staff)	Thuy Luu (undergraduate student)
	Esaac Mazengia (undergraduate student)
	Greg Olsen (staff)
	Sierra Red Bow (undergraduate student)
	Lauren Satterfield (graduate student)